REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 3, 4, 15, 17, 18, 26, 30, 31, 34 and 36 have been amended. Claims 2, 10, 11, 16, 23, 24, 28, 29, 33, 35 and 38 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 3-9, 12-15, 17-22, 25-27, 30-32, 34, 36, 37 and 39-47 are pending and under consideration.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 1, 10, 11, 15, 23, 26, 27, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37 and 40-47 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirasawa (US 6,980,233) (hereinafter "Hirasawa") in view of Aoki et al. (US 6,279,061) (hereinafter "Aoki").

Claims 24, 29, 33 and 39 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirasawa in view of Aoki and further in view of Gonzalez (US 6,023,769) (hereinafter "Gonzalez").

Independent claims 1, 15, 26, 31 and 36 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claims 2, 16, 28, 35 and 38, respectively, and are therefore believed to be allowable for at least the foregoing reason.

Claims 10, 11, 23, 24 and 29 have been cancelled. Claims 27, 32, 34, 37 and 39-47 are dependent on one of claims 26, 31 and 36, respectively, and are therefore believed to be allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

Withdrawal of the foregoing rejections is requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that claims 5-9, 12-14 and 25 have been allowed and that claims 2-4, 16-22, 28, 30, 35 and 38 have been found to contain allowable subject matter. Claims 2, 16, 28, 35 and 38 have been cancelled. Claims 17 and 30 have been rewritten in independent form. It is respectfully submitted that claims 3, 4 and 18-22 are allowable in their present condition.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

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By: Gregory W. Harper
Gregory W. Harper
Registration No. 55,248

1201 New York Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501